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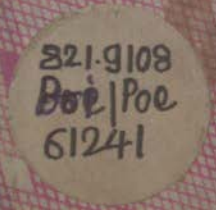
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POEMS OF THE GREAT WAR

DUTY

GIVE gladly, you rich—'tis no more than you owe—
For the weal of your Country, your wealth's overflow!
Even I that am poor am performing my part;
I am giving my brain, I am giving my heart.

WILLIAM WATSON

POEMS OF THE GREAT WAR

PUBLISHED ON BEHALF OF THE PRINCE OF WALES'S NATIONAL RELIEF FUND

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SECOND EDITION

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
1914

NOTE

THIS collection of War Poems, the net profits from which will be given to the Prince of Wales's Fund, represents the free offering of English poets to the cause of National Relief.

Most of the poems have appeared recently in the Press. Mr. Robert Bridges' opening contribution, Mr. Henry Newbolt's, Mr. Maurice Hewlett's, Mr. R. E. Vernède's, Mr. Binyon's, were all printed in the *Times* during the few days immediately following the declaration of war, as also was the sonnet by Mr. William Watson. Sir Owen Seaman's poem came out originally in *Punch*, "The Hour" in the *Daily Telegraph*, "The United Front" in the *Daily Mail*. "We Willed it Not" is reprinted from the *Sphere*, "Duty" and "Commandeered" from the *Westminster Gazette*, and the poems by Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Cecil Chesterton from the *New Witness*. The *New Weekly* published the verses by Mr. John Freeman, and the *Daily Chronicle* those by Mr. Harold Begbie. The two hymns which close the collection are reprinted, by special permission of their authors, from volumes previously published.

The publishers desire also to record their thanks to Mr. William Nicholson for the design which appears on the cover.

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"WAKE UP, ENGLAND"

THOU careless, awake !
Thou peacemaker, fight !
Stand, England, for honour,
And God guard the Right !

Thy mirth lay aside,
Thy cavil and play :
The foe is upon thee,
And grave is the day.

The monarch Ambition
Hath harnessed his slaves ;
But the folk of the Ocean
Are free as the waves.

For Peace thou art armed
Thy Freedom to hold :
Thy Courage as iron,
Thy Good-faith as gold.

Through Fire, Air, and Water
Thy trial must be :
But they that love life best
Die gladly for thee.

The Love of their mothers
  Is strong to command;
The fame of their fathers
  Is might to their hand.

Much suffering shall cleanse thee;
  But thou through the flood
Shalt win to Salvation,
  To Beauty through blood.

Up, careless, awake!
  Ye peacemakers, fight!
ENGLAND STANDS FOR HONOUR:
  GOD DEFEND THE RIGHT!

ROBERT BRIDGES,
Poet Laureate

THE VIGIL

ENGLAND ! where the sacred flame
Burns before the inmost shrine,
Where the lips that love thy name
Consecrate their hopes and thine,
Where the banners of thy dead
Weave their shadows overhead,
Watch beside thine arms to-night,
Pray that God defend the Right.

Think that when to-morrow comes
War shall claim command of all,
Thou must hear the roll of drums,
Thou must hear the trumpet's call.
Now before they silence ruth,
Commune with the voice of truth ;
England ! on thy knees to-night
Pray that God defend the Right.

Single-hearted, unafraid,
Hither all thy heroes came,
On this altar's steps were laid
Gordon's life and Outram's fame.

England ! if thy will be yet
By their great example set,
Here beside thine arms to-night
Pray that God defend the Right.

So shalt thou when morning comes
  Rise to conquer or to fall,
Joyful hear the rolling drums,
  Joyful hear the trumpet's call.
Then let memory tell thy heart;
" *England ! what thou wert, thou art !*"
Gird thee with thine ancient might,
Forth ! and God defend the Right !

HENRY NEWBOLT

TO THE TROUBLER OF THE WORLD

AT last we know you, War-lord. You, that flung
The gauntlet down, fling down the mask you wore,
Publish your heart, and let its pent hate pour,
You that had God for ever on your tongue.
We are old in war, and if in guile we are young,
Young also is the spirit that evermore
Burns in our bosom ev'n as heretofore,
Nor are these thews unbraced, these nerves unstrung.
We do not with God's name make wanton play;
We are not on such easy terms with Heaven;
But in Earth's hearing we can verily say,
"Our hands are pure; for peace, for peace we have striven";
And not by Earth shall he be soon forgiven
Who lit the fire accurst that flames to-day.

WILLIAM WATSON

TO ENGLAND: TO STRIKE QUICKLY

FIGHT, since thou must; strike quick and fierce,
So when this tyrant for too long
Hath shook the blood out of his ears
He may have learned the price of wrong.

Let him learn this, that the due grief
Of his own vice he cannot ban
By outrage of a highway thief;
Let him remember the Corsican,

Whom England only durst not dread
By sea or shore, but faced alone,
Nor stayed for pity of her dead
Until the despot's day was done.

Strike, England, quickly, make an end
Of him who seeks a deal with thee.
If he would bargain for thy friend,
What would he trade for Liberty?

MAURICE HEWLETT

THE FOURTH OF AUGUST

NOW in thy splendour go before us,
Spirit of England, ardent-eyed!
Enkindle this dear earth that bore us,
In the hour of peril purified.

The cares we hugged drop out of vision,
Our hearts with deeper thoughts dilate.
We step from days of sour division
Into the grandeur of our fate.

For us the glorious dead have striven;
They battled that we might be free.
We to that living cause are given,
We arm for men that are to be.

Among the nations nobliest chartered,
England recalls her heritage.
With her is that which is not bartered,
Which force can neither quell nor cage.

For her immortal stars are burning,
With her, the hope that's never done,
The seed that's in the Spring's returning,
The very flower that seeks the sun.

We fight the fraud that feeds desire on
  Lies, in a lust to enslave or kill,
The barren creed of blood and iron,
  Vampire of Europe's wasted will.

Endure, O Earth ! and thou, awaken,
  Purged by this dreadful winnowing-fan,
O wronged, untameable, unshaken
  Soul of divinely suffering man !

LAURENCE BINYON

THE UNITED FRONT

I.

THUS only should it come, if come it must;
Not with a riot of flags or a mob-born cry,
But with a noble faith, a conscience high
And pure and proud as heaven, wherein we trust,
We who have fought for peace, have dared the thrust
Of calumny for peace, and watched her die,
Her scutcheons rent from sky to outraged sky
By felon hands, and trampled into the dust.

We fought for peace, and we have seen the law
Cancelled, not once, nor twice, by felon hands,
But shattered, again, again, and yet again.
We fought for peace. Now, in God's name, we draw
The sword, not with a riot of flags and bands,
But silence, and a mustering of men.

II.

They challenge Truth. An Empire makes reply.
One faith, one flag, one honour, and one might.
From sea to sea, from height to war-worn height,
The old word rings out—to conquer, or to die.

And we shall conquer. Though their eagles fly
Through heaven, around this ancient isle unite
Powers that were never vanquished in the fight,
The unconquerable Powers that cannot lie.

But they who challenge Truth, Law, Justice, all
The bases on which God and man stand sure
Throughout all ages, fools !—they thought us torn
So far with discord that the blow might fall
Unanswered; and, while all those Powers endure,
This is our answer: Unity and Scorn.

III.

We trust not in the multitude of an host.
Nations that greatly builded, greatly stand.
In those dark hours, the Splendour of a Hand
Has moved behind the darkness, till that coast
Where hate and faction seemed to triumph most
Reveals itself—a buckler and a brand,
Our rough-hewn work, shining o'er sea and land,
But shaped to nobler ends than man could boast.

It is God's answer. Though, for many a year,
This land forgot the faith that made her great,
Now, as her fleets cast off the North Sea foam,
Casting aside all faction and all fear,
Thrice-armed in all the majesty of her fate,
Britain remembers, and her sword strikes home.

ALFRED NOYES

ENGLAND TO THE SEA

HEARKEN, O Mother, hearken to thy daughter!
Fain would I tell thee what men tell to me,
Saying that henceforth no more on any water
Shall I be first or great or loved or free,

But that these others—so the tale is spoken—
Who have not known thee all these centuries
By fire and sword shall yet turn England broken
Back from thy breast and beaten from thy seas,

Me—whom thou barest where thy waves should guard me,
Me—whom thou suckled'st on thy milk of foam,
Me—whom thy kisses shaped what while they marred me,
To whom thy storms are sweet and ring of home.

"Behold," they cry, "she is grown soft and strengthless,
All her proud memories changed to fear and fret."
Say, thou, who hast watched through ages that are lengthless,
Whom have I feared, and when did I forget?

What sons of mine have shunned thy whorls and
races?
Have I not reared for thee time and again
And bid go forth to share thy fierce embraces
Sea-ducks, sea-wolves, sea-rovers, and sea-men?

Names that thou knowest—great hearts that thou
holdest,
Rocking them, rocking them in an endless
wake—
Captains the world can match not with its boldest,
Hawke, Howard, Grenville, Frobisher, Drake?

Nelson—the greatest of them all—the master
Who swept across thee like a shooting star,
And, while the Earth stood veiled before disaster,
Caught Death and slew him—there—at Tra-
falgar?

Mother, they knew me then as thou didst know
me;
Then I cried, Peace, and every flag was furled:
But I am old, it seems, and they would show me
That never more my peace shall bind the world.

Wherefore, O Sea, I, standing thus before thee,
Stretch forth my hands unto thy surge and say:
"When they come forth who seek this empire o'er thee,
And I go forth to meet them—on that day

"God grant to us the old Armada weather,
The winds that rip, the heavens that stoop and lour—
Not till the Sea and England sink together,
Shall they be masters! Let them boast that hour!"

R. E. VERNÈDE

THE HOUR

WE'VE shut the gates by Dover Straits,
And North, where the tides run free,
Cheek by jowl, our watchdogs prowl,
Grey hulks in a greyer sea.
And the prayer that England prays to-night—
O Lord of our destiny!—
As the foam of our plunging prows, is white;
We have stood for peace, and we war for right,
God give us victory!

Now slack, now strung, from the mainmast flung,
The flag throbs fast in the breeze;
Strained o'er the foam, like the hearts at home
That beat for their sons on the seas.
For mothers and wives are praying to-night—
O Lord of our destiny!—
But we've no time, for our lips are tight,
Our fists are clenched, and we're stripped to fight.
God give us victory!

The west winds blow in the face of the foe—
Old Drake is beating his drum—

They drank to "The Day," for "The Hour" we
pray.
The day and the hour have come.
The sea-strewn Empire prays to-night—
O Lord of our destiny!—
Thou didst give the seas into Britain's might,
For the freedom of Thy seas we smite.
God give us victory!

JAMES BERNARD FAGAN

THE WIFE OF FLANDERS

LOW and brown barns, thatched and repatched
and tattered,
Where I had seven sons until to-day—
A little hill of hay your spur has scattered. . .
This is not Paris. You have lost the way.

You, staring at your sword to find it brittle,
Surprised at the surprise that was your plan,
Who shaking and breaking barriers not a little,
Find never more the death-door of Sedan.

Must I for more than carnage call you claimant,
Paying you a penny for each son you slay?
Man, the whole globe in gold were no repayment
For what you have lost. And how shall I repay?

What is the price of that red spark that caught me
From a kind farm that never had a name?
What is the price of that dead man they brought me?
For other dead men do not look the same.

How should I pay for one poor graven steeple
Whereon you shattered what you shall not know ?
How should I pay you, miserable people,
How should I pay you everything you owe ?

Unhappy, can I give you back your honour ?
Though I forgave, would any man forget ?
While all the great green land has trampled on her
The treason and terror of the night we met.

Not any more in vengeance or in pardon,
One old wife bargains for a bean that's hers.
You have no word to break : no heart to harden.
Ride on and prosper. You have lost your spurs.

G. K. CHESTERTON

THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES

AND now, while the dark vast earth shakes and rocks
In this wild dreamlike snare of mortal shocks,
How look (I muse) those cold and solitary stars
On these magnificent, cruel wars ?—
Venus, that brushes with her shining lips
(Surely !) the wakeful edge of the world and mocks
With hers its all ungentle wantonness ?—
Or the large moon (pricked by the spars of ships
Creeping and creeping in their restlessness),
The moon pouring strange light on things more strange,
Looks she unheedfully on seas and lands
Trembling with change and fear of counterchange?

O, not earth trembles, but the stars, the stars !
The sky is shaken and the cool air is quivering.
I cannot look up to the crowded height
And see the fair stars trembling in their light,
For thinking of the starlike spirits of men
Crowding the earth and with great passion quivering :—
Stars quenched in anger and hate, stars sick with pity.

I cannot look up to the naked skies
Because a sorrow on dark midnight lies,
Death, on the living world of sense;
Because on my own land a shadow lies
That may not rise;
Because from bare grey hillside and rich city
Streams of uncomprehending sadness pour,
Thwarting the eager spirit's pure intelligence. . .
How look (I muse) those cold and solitary stars
On these magnificent, cruel wars?

Stars trembled in broad heaven, faint with pity.
An hour to dawn I looked. Beside the trees
Wet mist shaped other trees that branching rose,
Covering the woods and putting out the stars.
There was no murmur on the seas,
No wind blew—only the wandering air that grows
With dawn, then murmurs, sighs,
And dies.
The mist climbed slowly, putting out the stars,
And the earth trembled when the stars were gone;
And moving strangely everywhere upon
The trembling earth, thickened the watery mist.

And for a time the holy things are veiled.
England's wise thoughts are swords; her quiet hours

Are trodden underfoot like wayside flowers,
And every English heart is England's wholly.
In starless night
A serious passion streams the heaven with light.
A common beating is in the air—
The heart of England throbbing everywhere.
And all her roads are nerves of noble thought,
And all her people's brain is but her brain;
And all her history (less her shame)
Is part of her requickened consciousness.
Her courage rises clean again;
Her children's inspiration is her name, her name!

Even in victory there hides defeat;
The spirit's murdered though the body survives,
Except the cause for which a people strives
Burn with no covetous, foul heat;
Fights she against herself who infamously draws
The sword against man's secret spiritual laws.
But thou, England, because a bitter heel
Hath sought to bruise the brain, the sensitive will,
The conscience of the world,
For this, England, art risen, and shalt fight
Purely through long profoundest night,

Making their quarrel thine who are grieved like thee;
And (if to thee the stars yield victory)
Tempering their hate of the great foe, that hurled
Vainly her strength against the conscience of the world,
Though all their dead be countless as the stars,
And all the living bitter as the sea.

I looked again, or dreamed I looked, and saw
The stars again and all their peace again.
The moving mist had gone, and shining still
The moon went high and pale above the hill.
Not now those lights were trembling in the vast
Ways of the nervy heaven, nor trembled earth:
Profound and calm they gazed as the soft-shod hours passed.
And with less fear (not with less awe,
Remembering, England, all the blood and pain),
How look, I cried, ye stern and solitary stars
On these disastrous wars!

JOHN FREEMAN

COMMANDEERED

LAST year he drew the harvest home
Along the winding upland lane;
The children twisted marigolds
And clover flowers, to deck his mane.
Last year—he drew the harvest home!

To-day—with puzzled, patient face,
With ears a-droop, and weary feet,
He marches to the sound of drums,
And draws the gun along the street.
To-day—he draws the guns of war!

L. G. MOBERLY

THE MAN WHO KEEPS HIS HEAD

THERE'S a man who fights for England, and he'll keep her still atop,
He will guard her from dishonour in the market and the shop,
He will save her homes from terror on the fields of Daily Bread,
He's the man who sticks to business, he's the man who keeps his head.

Let the foe who strikes at England hear her wheels of commerce turn,
Let the ships that war with England see her factory furnace burn;
For the foe most fears the cannon, and his heart most quails with dread
When behind the man in khaki is the man who keeps his head.

Brand him traitor and assassin who with miser's coward mood
Has his gold locked up in secret and his larders stored with food,

Who has cast adrift his workers, who lies sweating
in his bed,
And who snarls to hear the laughter of the man
who keeps his head.

Let the poor man teach the rich man, for the poor
man's constant strife
Is from day to day to seek work, day by day to war
with life,
And the poor man's home hangs ever by a frail and
brittle thread,
And the poor man's often hungry, but the poor
man keeps his head.

When the ships come back from slaughter, and the
troops march home from war;
When the havoc strewn behind us threats the road
that lies before,
Every hero shall be welcomed, every orphan shall
be fed,
By the man who stuck to business, by the man who
kept his head.

HAROLD BEGBIE

FRANCE

BECAUSE for once the sword broke in her hand,
The words she spoke seemed perished for a space;
All wrong was brazen, and in every land
The tyrants walked abroad with naked face.

The waters turned to blood, as rose the Star
Of evil fate denying all release.
The rulers smote, the feeble crying "War!"
The usurers robbed, the naked crying "Peace!"

And her own feet were caught in nets of gold,
And her own soul profaned by sects that squirm,
And little men climbed her high seats and sold
Her honour to the vulture and the worm.

And she seemed broken and they thought her dead,
The Over-Men, so brave against the weak.
Has your last word of sophistry been said,
O cult of slaves? Then it is hers to speak.

Clear the slow mists from her half-darkened eyes,
As slow mists parted over Valmy fell,
And once again her hands in high surprise
Take hold upon the battlements of Hell.

CECIL CHESTERTON

WE WILLED IT NOT

WE willed it not. We have not lived in hate,
Loving too well the shires of England thrown
From sea to sea to covet your estate,
Or wish one flight of fortune from your throne.

We had grown proud because the nations stood
Hoping together against the calumny
That, tortured of its old barbarian blood,
Barbarian still the heart of man should be.

Builders there are who name you overlord,
Building with us the citadels of light,
Who hold as we this chartered sin abhorred,
And cry you risen Cæsar of the Night.

Beethoven speaks with Milton on this day,
And Shakespeare's word with Goethe's beats the sky,
In witness of the birthright you betray,
In witness of the vision you deny.

We love the hearth, the quiet hills, the song,
The friendly gossip come from every land;
And very peace were now a nameless wrong,—
You thrust this bitter quarrel to our hand.

For this your pride the tragic armies go,
And the grim navies watch along the seas;
You trade in death, you mock at life, you throw
To God the tumult of your blasphemies.

You rob us of our love-right. It is said.
In treason to the world you are enthroned.
We rise, and, by the yet ungathered dead,
Not lightly shall the treason be atoned.

JOHN DRINKWATER

PRO PATRIA

ENGLAND, in this great fight to which you go
Because, where Honour calls you, go you must,
Be glad, whatever comes, at least to know
You have your quarrel just.

Peace was your care ; before the nations' bar
Her cause you pleaded and her ends you sought;
But not for her sake, being what you are,
Could you be bribed and bought.

Others may spurn the pledge of land to land,
May with the brute sword stain a gallant past;
But by the seal to which *you* set your hand,
Thank God, you still stand fast!

Forth, then, to front that peril of the deep
With smiling lips and in your eyes the light,
Stedfast and confident, of those who keep
Their storied scutcheon bright.

And we, whose burden is to watch and wait—
High-hearted ever, strong in faith and prayer,
We ask what offering we may consecrate,
What humble service share.

To steel our souls against the lust of ease;
To find our welfare in the general good;
To hold together, merging all degrees
In one wide brotherhood;—

To teach that he who saves himself is lost;
To bear in silence though our hearts may bleed;
To spend ourselves, and never count the cost,
For others' greater need;—

To go our quiet ways, subdued and sane;
To hush all vulgar clamour of the street;
With level calm to face alike the strain
Of triumph or defeat;—

This be our part, for so we serve you best,
So best confirm their prowess and their pride,
Your warrior sons, to whom in this high test
Our fortunes we confide.

OWEN SEAMAN

HYMN BEFORE ACTION

THE earth is full of anger,
The seas are dark with wrath,
The Nations in their harness
Go up against our path :
Ere yet we loose the legions—
Ere yet we draw the blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid !

High lust and froward bearing,
Proud heart, rebellious brow—
Deaf ear and soul uncaring,
We seek Thy mercy now !
The sinner that forswore Thee,
The fool that passed Thee by,
Our times are known before Thee—
Lord, grant us strength to die !

From panic, pride, and terror,
Revenge that knows no rein,
Light haste and lawless error,
Protect us yet again,

Cloak Thou our undeserving,
  Make firm the shuddering breath,
In silence and unswerving
  To taste Thy lesser death!

Ah! Mary, pierced with sorrow,
  Remember, reach and save
The soul that comes to-morrow
  Before the God that gave;
Since each was born of woman,
  For each at utter need—
True comrade and true foeman—
  Madonna, intercede!

E'en now their vanguard gathers,
  E'en now we face the fray—
As Thou didst help our fathers,
  Help Thou our host to-day!
Fulfilled of signs and wonders,
  In life, in death made clear—
Jehovah of the Thunders,
  Lord God of Battles, hear!

RUDYARD KIPLING

"YATTENDON HYMNAL NO. 54"

Tune: Tallis's "Canon," original setting.

REJOICE, O land, in God thy might.
His will obey, Him serve aright.
For thee the saints uplift their voice.
Fear not, O land, in God rejoice.

Glad shalt thou be, with blessing crown'd.
With joy and peace thou shalt abound.
Yea, love with thee shall make his home,
Until thou see God's kingdom come.

He shall forgive thy sins untold.
Remember thou His love of old.
Walk in His way, His word adore,
And keep His truth for evermore.

ROBERT BRIDGES,
Poet Laureate

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